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ABSTRACT

In spring 1988, a survey was conducted of the student body at Cumberland County College (CCC) to obtain insight into students' perceptions of student activities programs at the college, the characteristics of participants in these activities, the activities students would like to see offered, and the most convenient times. A random sample of 202 students returned 114 usable surveys for a response rate of 65.5%. Among the respondents, 63% attended part-time, 71% were female, and 82% were degree-seeking students. Study findings included the following: (1) 80% of the respondents considered the availability of student activities to be important or very important; (2) 58% rated the quality of student activities as average; (3) 68% indicated that they had never participated in any type of student activity at CCC; (4) among students who had participated in activities, involvement was greatest in seminars and workshops, clubs, and guest speaker presentations; (5) students tended to prefer programs scheduled in the evenings or on weekends; (6) over 50 respondents indicated that they would be likely to attend musical and sporting events on campus, while at least 45 students expressed an interest in overnight trips, guest speakers, seminars/workshops, and theater trips; (7) lack of time and other responsibilities were given as reasons for low attendance rates; and (8) among suggestions for additional programs, sporting events for exercise rather than competition was cited most frequently. Selected tables with response data are included. (JMC)

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A SURVEY OF FACTORS AND ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS AT A RURAL TWO-YEAR COLLEGE WHICH PROMOTE LOW PARTICIPATION IN STUDENT ACTIVITIES PROGRAMS

An Institutional Study

by:

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September 19, 1990

JC 900472

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Summary of Results of the 1988 Student Needs Committee Survey

During the Spring semester of 1988, the Student Needs Committee agreed to conduct a survey of the student body regarding student activities at Cumberland County College. The survey was constructed and mailed to a ten percent random sample of the student body.

At that time, approximately 2,020 students were enrolled at Cumberland. Two hundred and two surveys were mailed out. There were 118 surveys returned, 114 of which were usable. Thus, there was a response rate of 65.5 percent of surveys used to compile the data.

The survey was constructed to obtain insight into the following questions: (a) How do our students perceive the student activities programs offered by Cumberland? (b) Who participates in student activities? (c) What activities would students like to see offered in the future? (d) When would they be most likely to attend them?

Results

Characteristics of Respondents

Of the 114 students who responded to the survey, 63 percent were part-time and 37 attended full-time. Nineteen (19) percent were transfer students and 81 percent began their college studies at Cumberland. Seventy-one (71) percent were female and 29 percent male. Regarding students ages, the largest group was the 24 or younger age group with

39 percent. Other age groups represented were: 25 to 29, 17 percent; 30 to 34, 15 percent; 35 to 39, 12 percent; 40 or over, 17 percent. Seventy-nine (79) percent of the sample were employed while 21 percent reported having no job. Of those who were employed, 67 percent were employed full-time and 33 percent had part-time jobs. As anticipated, the largest ethnic group represented in the survey was White with 83 percent. Blacks and Hispanics each represented 14.5 percent, and all others constituted the remaining 2 percent.

The characteristics of the respondents seemed to indicate that the survey was effective in obtaining a representative sample of the student body at Cumberland County College.

Degree Status of Respondents

Eighty-two (82) percent of those who responded indicated that they were degree seeking students. The remaining 18 percent were not pursuing a degree. Of those who were seeking a degree, their degree majors were as follows:

Degree Program	Percent
Liberal Arts	22
Nursing	22
Accounting	8
Education (all programs)	8
Data Processing	7
Marketing	6
Community Service	4
Agriculture/Horticulture	2
Law Enforcement	1
Legal Technology	1
Office Systems Technology	0
all others	19

Class Standing of Respondents

Freshman represented 50 percent of the students who responded to the survey. Sophomores represented 38 percent, and 12 percent were graduates.

Respondents Perceptions of Student Activities at CCC

Students were asked to indicate how important they felt it is for student activities to be made available at Cumberland. These responses were:

important ..... 50 percent
very important ..... 30 percent
relatively unimportant ..... 20 percent

The students were also asked to rate the quality of the student activities programs currently being offered at the college. Fifty-eight (58) percent of the students rated the programs average, 28 percent rated the programs above average, and 20 percent rated the programs below average. On a ten point rating scale (1=poor, 10=excellent) the average rating for the quality of student activities programs at Cumberland was 5.03.

Past Participation in Student Activities Programs

Students were asked to indicate how many of thirteen various student activities they had participated in since their initial enrollment at Cumberland. Many of these items were left blank or "none" was written on the item. In total, 68 percent of the respondents indicated that they had never participated in any type of student activity at Cumberland.

Of the remaining 37 students, or 32 percent, 77 responses were made. These responses are summarized here:

Activity	Percent
1. seminar or workshop	18
2. student club member	17
3. guest speaker	12
4. fund raising activity	8
5. holiday party	8
6. sporting event	8
7. cultural event	7
8. dance party	5
9. musical event	5
10. overnight trip	3
11. theater trip	3
12. drama club play	0
13. political debate	0
other - please identify	
14. blood mobile	1
15. college night	1
16. fencing	1
17. films in student lounge	1
18. museum trip	1
19. SGA Senator	1

It should be remembered that these percentages represent the participation of 32 percent of the respondents who indicated that they had participated in one or more student activity events.

Planning Future Events

Students were asked when they would most likely be available to attend extracurricular activities on campus. Responses to this question were duplicated in that each student could indicate as many slots as they wished. Slots were defined as day, afternoon, and evening, (3) times (7) days of the week. Thus, there were 21 slots in which students could check as many as they wished. See Appendix I for the actual frequencies obtained in the table. There was

a general trend for students to prefer programs that occurred in the evening over the afternoon or daytime, and for events that ocurred later in the week, especially on the weekend than during the week, with the exception of Fridays. The single highest scoring slot was Tuesday evening with 37.

Students were also asked to rank which activities identified above they would most likely attend if they were available during the year. On this item 91 surveys were used, 14 respondents left the item blank, and 9 surveys were omitted because numbers were not used to rank activities. Responses to this item were not equally weighted among all 91 students. On many items students ranked five activities, but on others they ranked less than five, and in some cases all 13 activities were assigned a ranking.

The activity with the most rankings was "musical events" with 58. Second was "sporting events" with 52; third was "overnight trips", 46, and there was a three way tie for fourth place among "guest speakers on campus", "seminars or workshops", and "theater trips", all with 45 rankings each. The activity with the most first place rankings was "sporting events" with 16. See Appendix II for the complete data on this item.

Students were asked to indicate how they became aware of student activities events at Cumberland. Through what medium of communication they were informed of activities? One hundred and three (103) students responded to this question

and collectively gave 197 responses. These results were as follows:

Source of Information	Frequency	Percent
1. on campus flyer	56	28
2. college mail sent to your home	33	17
3. word of mouth	32	16
4. professor's announcement in class	29	15
5. newspaper	19	10
6. SGA	11	6
7. radio	8	4
8. college bulletin board	4	2
9. off campus flyer	3	2
10. Salem /Cumberland Guide	1	<1
11. a counselor	1	<1
Total	197	100

Student's Perceptions of Lack of Attendance at Activities

Students were asked the following question. "During recent years, the Student Government Association and other groups have organized a variety of student activities on campus. The attendance at these functions has very often been less than expected. What do you feel are some reasons for low attendance at these events?" Eighty-four (84) students responded to this question. Four categories of responses reflected student's opinions to this question.

A. Lack of time and other responsibilities - This was the largest category with 36 students, or 43 percent of those who responded to the question. The attitudes of students in this category are reflected in the following statements by students.

> "Time and schedules. Working mothers barely are able to juggle home, school, and work. Little time off to enjoy extra school activities. I come to school and leave to go to work - unable to

attend any functions."

"...I am the mother of three school age children. With school and work, it would not matter what you scheduled or when, I probably could not attend. This is certainly representative of some of your students at Cumberland..."

"In my case my time is very limited between school, work and raising a family."

"Many students work and have families, therefor, leisure time for these activities is limited."

"The majority of the student body is older, working, family people with limited free time."

B. Insufficient publicity to advertise activities - Thirty-three (33) students, or 39 percent of those responding to this question felt events need to be publicized more.

C. Types of programs and the times they are offered - Eight students, or 10 percent of respondents indicated that the type of activities offered appeals to a small portion of the student body. And when activities are conducted they are done so at times that the mainstream student population cannot attend.

D. Low interest among students - The smallest group of respondents to this item, 8 percent, indicated that student morale or interest was low. One student stated that there was no "team spirit" at CCC.

Student's Suggestions Regarding Other Activitees

In the last section of te survey, students were invited to make recommendations concerning additional programs, activities, or services they felt should be offered at Cumberland. About 45 various suggestions were made. However, only those which were repeated by three or more students are

identified here. They are listed in their order of frequency.

1. Sporting related activities was the overwhelming response made by students to this item. The emphasis was placed upon opportunities for students to engage in some sort of physical exercise rather than participation in an intercollegiate sport.

2. There is a consensus that our current means of advertising activities on and off campus is lacking in effectiveness to reach the student body.

3. There should be more activities to attract the interest of older students and for students with families.

4. Day care services were indicated by a few students as a needed service.

5. Services for evening and Saturday students should be extended. These include cafeteria services, and extended book store and library hours.

6. The student lounge should be made more comfortable, and a lounge in the Academic Building would be welcomed.

7. Job placement services were requested by a few students.

8. Dances should occur more often.

9. Theater trips should be more regular.

Appendix I

13. When would you most likely be available to attend an extracurricular activity on campus? (check all that apply)

	day	afternoon	evening	total
Monday -	8	4	32	44
Tuesday -	10	13	37	60
Wednesday -	7	10	33	50
Thursday -	11	11	36	58
Friday -	9	8	30	47
Saturday -	23	28	32	83
Sunday -	24	29	24	77
total	**92**	**103**	**224**	426

Frequency table of student's preferences for scheduling Student Activities events based on responses from 92 students.

Appendix II

14. Using the numbers 1 (for first) through 5 (for fifth), please rank the top five activities you would be most likely to attend assuming they would be offered throughout the year.

Frequency of individual rankings

	first	second	third	fourth	fifth	total
student club -	6	3	3	6	9	27
cultural event -	4	13	7	7	3	34
theater trip -	11	12	7	8	7	45
guest speaker -	13	10	12	5	5	45
seminar/workshop -	13	10	12	5	5	45
dance party -	10	10	8	6	7	41
holiday party -	3	8	8	8	10	37
overnight trip -	6	5	12	8	15	46
sporting event -	16	6	13	6	11	52
musical event -	12	7	12	19	8	58
political event -	2	4	4	3	13	26
drama club play -	1	9	8	4	8	30

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